BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

translation by

DANA LEWIS and TOREN SMITH

lettering and retouch by

TOMOKO SAITO

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MANJI
Immortal *rōnin*

RIN
Last heir of the Mutenichi *ryū dōjō* destroyed by Ittō-*ryū*

MAGATSU
Former Ittō *ryū* swordsman

SHIRA
Terrifyingly sadistic Akagi assassin

THE STORY SO FAR

Infected by *kessenchu* mystical bloodworms which can heal all wounds and grant their host immortality Manji's bloodthirst led to the capture and murder of his sister To atone for the 100 good people who died at his hand under his corrupted lord Manji vowed to slay 1 000 evil men in exchange for the release of death

Two years earlier when her parents were murdered on her fourteenth birthday by Anotsu Kagehisa's Ittō-*ryū* swordsmen Rin Asano became part of a mad revenge cycle which began when Anotsu's grandfather was thrown out of the Asano clan's Mutenichi *ryu dōjō* fifty years before A quest for vengeance was instilled in Anotsu a similar quest now haunts Rin Upon learning of Manji she enlisted his aid to destroy the Ittō-*ryū* and avenge her parents

Last Issue

Shira and three hired thugs ambush Manji and Magatsu Shira cuts off Manji's arm and thinking he's gained the upper hand takes time to gloat Then, Magatsu challenges Shira who refuses to fight anyone but Manji himself When Magatsu attacks Shira, the white haired lunatic stabs him with a concealed weapon The weapon turns out to be Shira's radius and ulna the bones of his forearm which he has hacked bare and sharpened Manji acts impressed by this and agrees to fight Shira He then tackles Shira and the two tumble down a slope into the forest This surprises Magatsu who rushes into the woods to find them His search continues

designer DEBRA BAILEY assistant editor MICHAEL CARRIGLITTO editor TIM ERVIN-GORE publisher MIKE RICHARDSON

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無限の住人

FALL FROST

–part three–

AH!
YEOWCH!
SHIT
SHIT
SHIT!!
DAMN.

HOLD ON... THAT'S NOT MANJI-SENSEI'S.
SO IT'S GOTTA BE...

HAH! MAGATSU TAITO JUST ABOUT PISSED HIM-SELF!
WHEW.
DON'T SCARE ME LIKE THAT, MAN.
THE IMPOR-TANT THING, MAGATSU MY BOY, IS I WAS RIGHT.
"JUST ABOUT PISSED"...?
HEY, SCREW YOU!!
WHAT-EVER. WE CAN FIGHT ABOUT IT LATER.
REMEMBER WHAT SHIRA SAID?
IT HURTS LIKE HELL WHEN HE USES IT... RIGHT?
WELL... YEAH. SO...?
I CUT THAT HAND OFF HIM. AND IT WASN'T A YEAR AGO...
...IT WAS ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO.
SO HE'S STILL NOT USED TO IT.
FIGHTING ONE-HANDED, I MEAN.

IF HE'D ALREADY LEARNED HOW TO KEEP HIS BALANCE, HE WOULDN'T HAVE TUMBLED SO FAR WHEN I NAILED HIM.
CARVING DOWN TO THE BONE'S WORKING *AGAINST* HIM, SEE?
...HE'LL HAVE A HEART ATTACK JUST TRYING TO STAY ON HIS FEET.
AND THAT WAS ON HARD-PACKED *ROAD*. HERE IN THE WOODS, ON SOFT, ROUGH GROUND...
HUH? I THOUGHT *YOU* WERE FIGHTING HIM NOW.
HEY! ME
COME ON!! WHAT THE HELL DID I DRAG YOU OUT HERE FOR?
STUPID KID!
IF HE CAN KICK YOUR ASS *HERE*, YOU *OUGHT* TO CUT YOUR BELLY. GET IT?
"HE WHO HOLDS THE LAND CAN CONQUER HEAVEN." YOU REMEMBER THAT? FIRST TIME WE MET?

I SAID ALL THAT SHIT JUST TO SHAKE HIM OFF. AND TO GIVE YOU THIS NICE ARENA TO FIGHT IN.
OH, YEAH? AND WHAT KIND OF LOSER IS SO WORRIED ABOUT HIS LITTLE GIRLY HE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO FIGHT?
MAN... WHAT KIND OF LOSER GETS HIMSELF SLICED AND DICED TO AVENGE SOME WOMAN?
ANYWAY... THIS IS MY LAST FAVOR, KID.
YEAH, WELL... TWO LOSERS ON A ROADTRIP, RIGHT?
SO DON'T WASTE IT.
BWA HAW HAW HAW!
WHAT'S SO FUNNY?! PRETENDING I OWE YOU ONE WHEN I'M PROBABLY SAVING YOUR SORRY ASS?!
YOU THINK THAT'S FUNNY?!

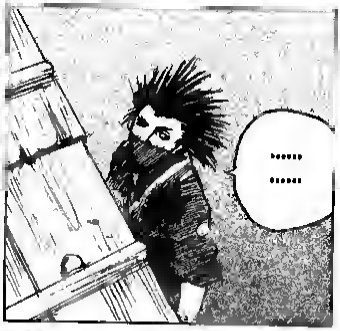
I THINK I SHALL JUST BUTCHER THE BASTARD. THANK YOU OH SO VERY MUCH.
OKAY, OKAY... WHATEVER. YOU'RE TOO KIND.
IT'S BEEN REAL, MANJI, BUT... SEE YA.
HEH HEH... ENJOY THE BLOOD 'N' GUTS! HE WOULD.
I'M GRATEFUL, FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART, I DON'T HAVE TO LISTEN TO YOU ALL THE WAY TO KAGA.
DON'T CREEP ME OUT.
WELL, NOW...

WHEW!

GCHOK

DAMN IT!
YOU IDIOT!
HE DIDN'T SAY KILL HIM!
IT'S COOL, MAN! HE WON'T DIE.
IT WASN'T FATAL...
PROBABLY
WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO, HUH?!
YOU SAW IT! DUDE JUST STUCK HIS ARM BACK ON!
BESIDES, YOU SAW HIM FIGHT! HE COULD TAKE ALL THREE OF US!
YOU GOT ANY BETTER IDEAS? HUH?!

JUST RELAX, MAN. THE BOSS IS BAD NEWS, TOO.
SHIT... HE'LL PROBABLY LIKE IT IF THE GUY'S HALF-DEAD, YEAH?
HUH? AW, SHIT!
WHY, YOU...!!
GHUL
QUICK! GIMME ANOTHER SWORD!
URG...
.....
AGH!
SHUK
CHOK
GHUK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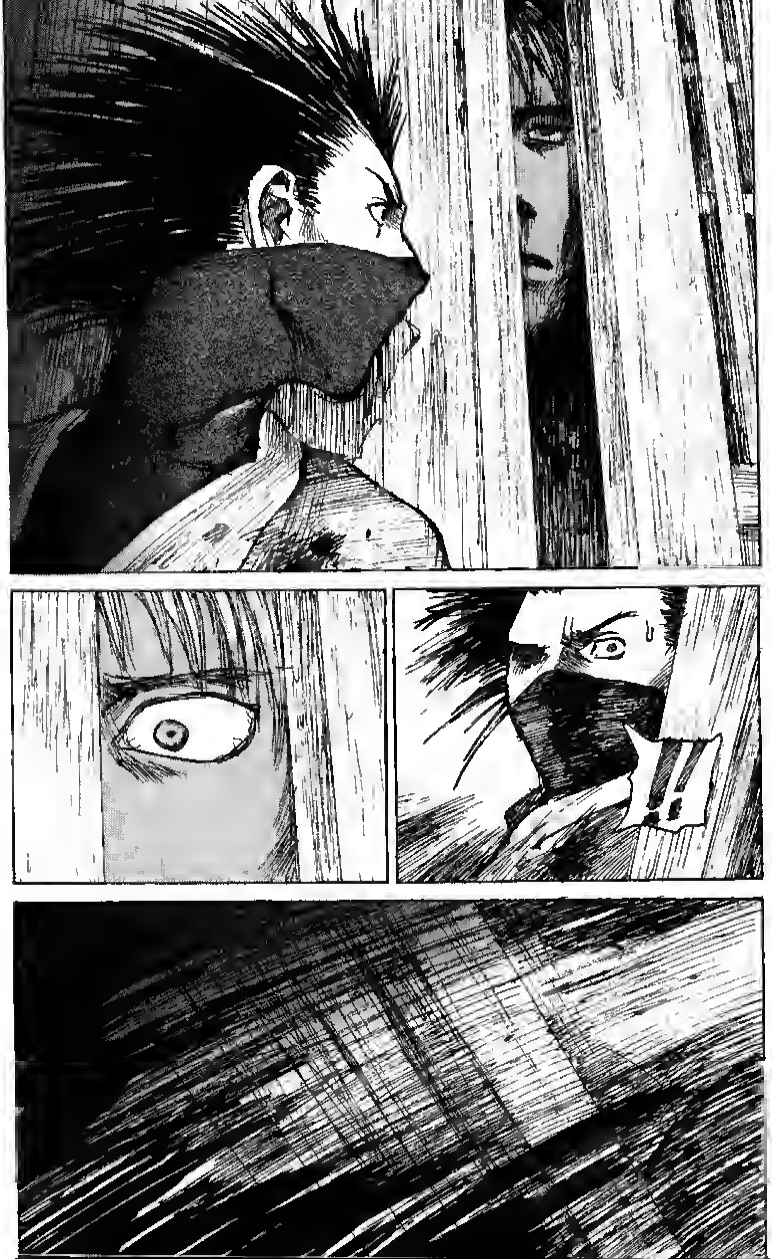


TIME TO DIE...!!

AH?!
YOU AGAIN?!
MANJI! WHERE'S THAT GODDAMN MANJI?!
HE'S SICK OF YOUR UGLY MUG.
HE'S NOT COMING.

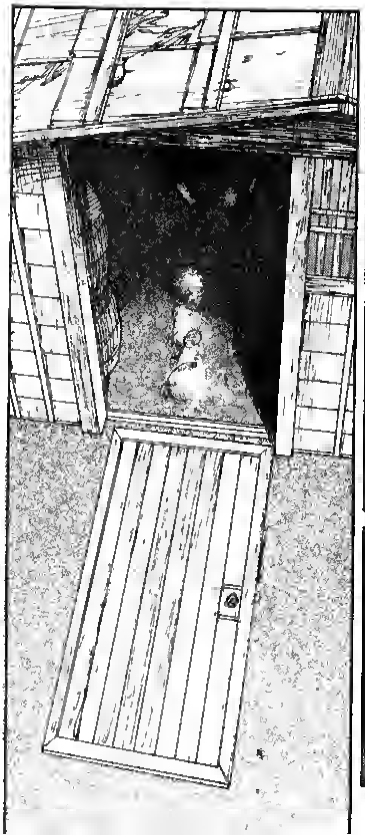
I TOLD YOU, ASSHOLE--
--YOU'RE FIGHTING ME. THIS IS MY DAY!
WELL...?
MASATSU... THAT'S YOUR NAME, RIGHT?
WEIRD SWORD. HOME-GROWN TECHNIQUE.
DON'T TELL ME... YOU'RE ITTŌ-RYŪ?

HEY HEY HEY!
IS THIS FOR REAL? SINCE WHEN DID MANJI START WORKING FOR YOU GUYS?!
?
SO WHAT IF I AM?
YOUR BOSS MAN'S IN DEEP SHIT IN KAGA. HE... .....
YOU DUMB SHIT-- YOU AIN'T GOT TIME FOR THIS PRIVATE REVENGE CRAP! YOU BETTER HURRY ON BACK!
.....
.....?
HUH... MAYBE I SHOULDN'T'VE SAID THAT.

HEY!
WHAT'S GOING ON IN KAGA?! TELL ME!
HEH, HEH... NOT TOO CLASSY, BEGGING FOR HANDOUTS. RIGHT, PAL?
YOU WANT TO SEE "WHAT'S GOING ON IN KAGA"...?
GO FIND OUT FOR YOUR-SELF.
AND LET MANJI DEAL WITH ME. YEAH?
HRM... THOSE THREE STOOGES...
...THEY BETTER BE DOING THEIR DAMN JOB.

퍽!
GOGOGO

TH... THAT FUCKING HURT!
GUFF!
WHOO



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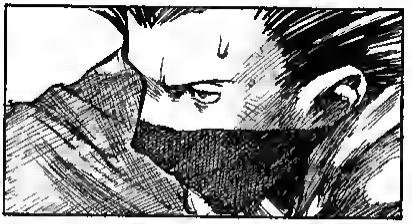
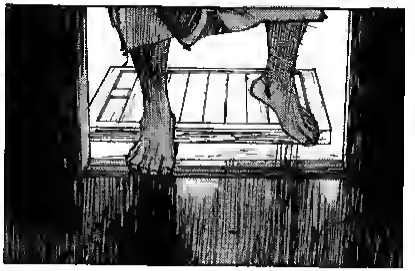
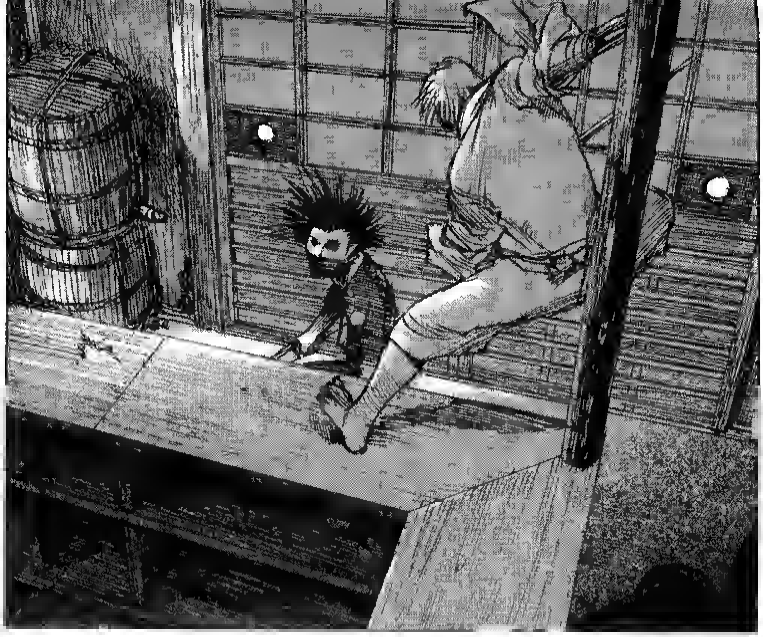


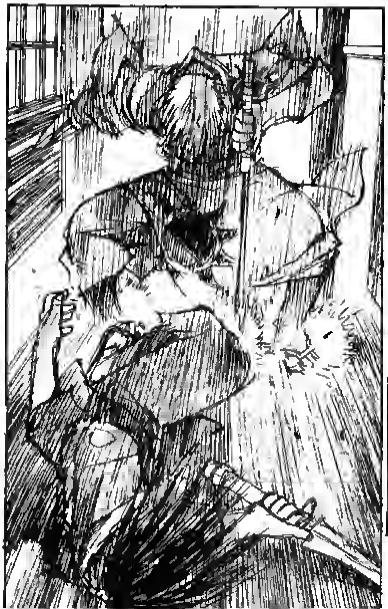


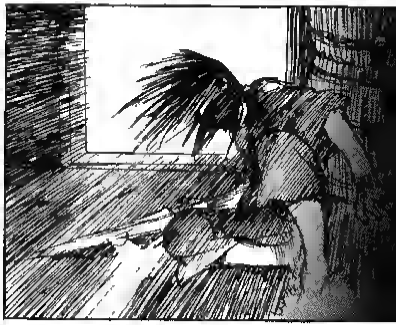
A LITTLE *LIGHT* FOR THIS KINDA WORK, AIN'T YA?
GH HEH HEH HEH...

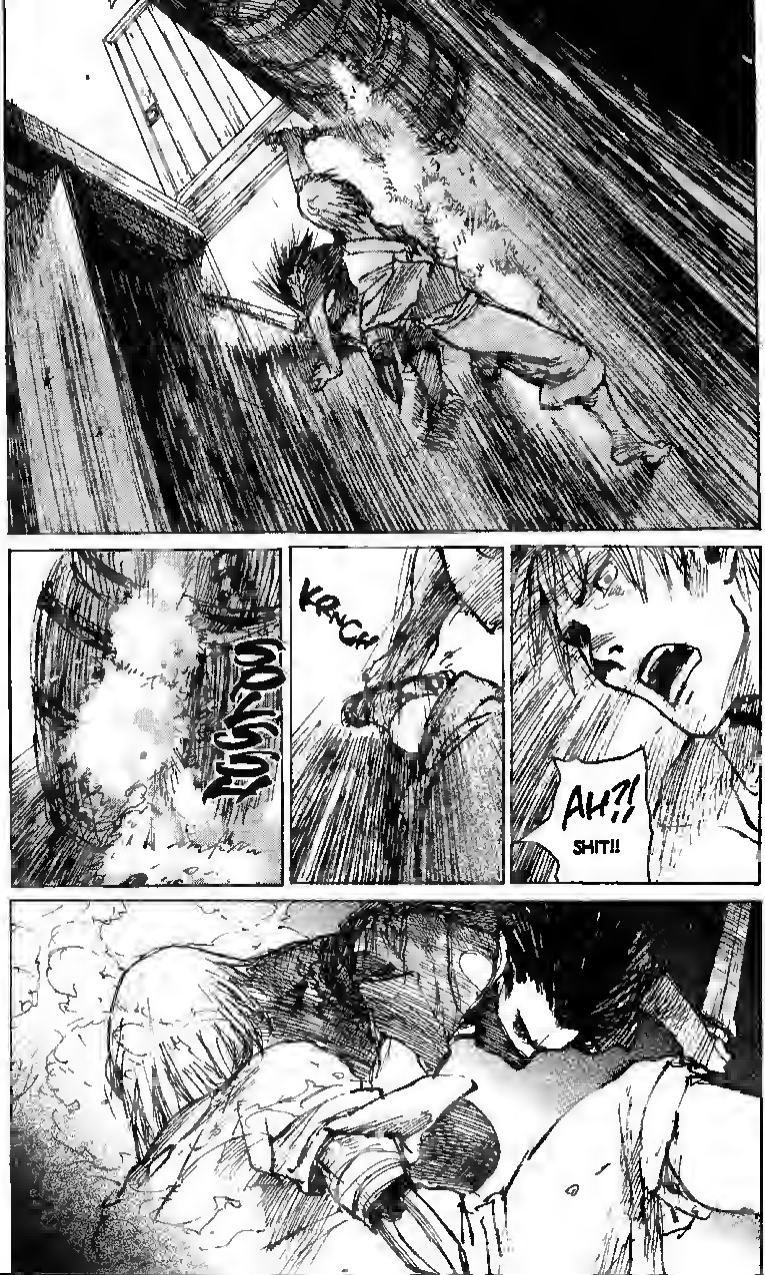
YOU KNOW... HATING OTHER PEOPLE...
...IT'S NOT HALF BAD.
.....
HEH, HEH...
IT'S REAL... HOW WOULD YOU SAY...?
SATISFY-ING.
YEAH.
FOR SOME STREET PUNK WITH NOTHING ELSE...
...LIKE ME... IT'S ABOUT THE ONLY THING WORTH LIVING FOR.
AND I'M NOT LETTING SOME SNOT-NOSED KID GET IN MY WAY!

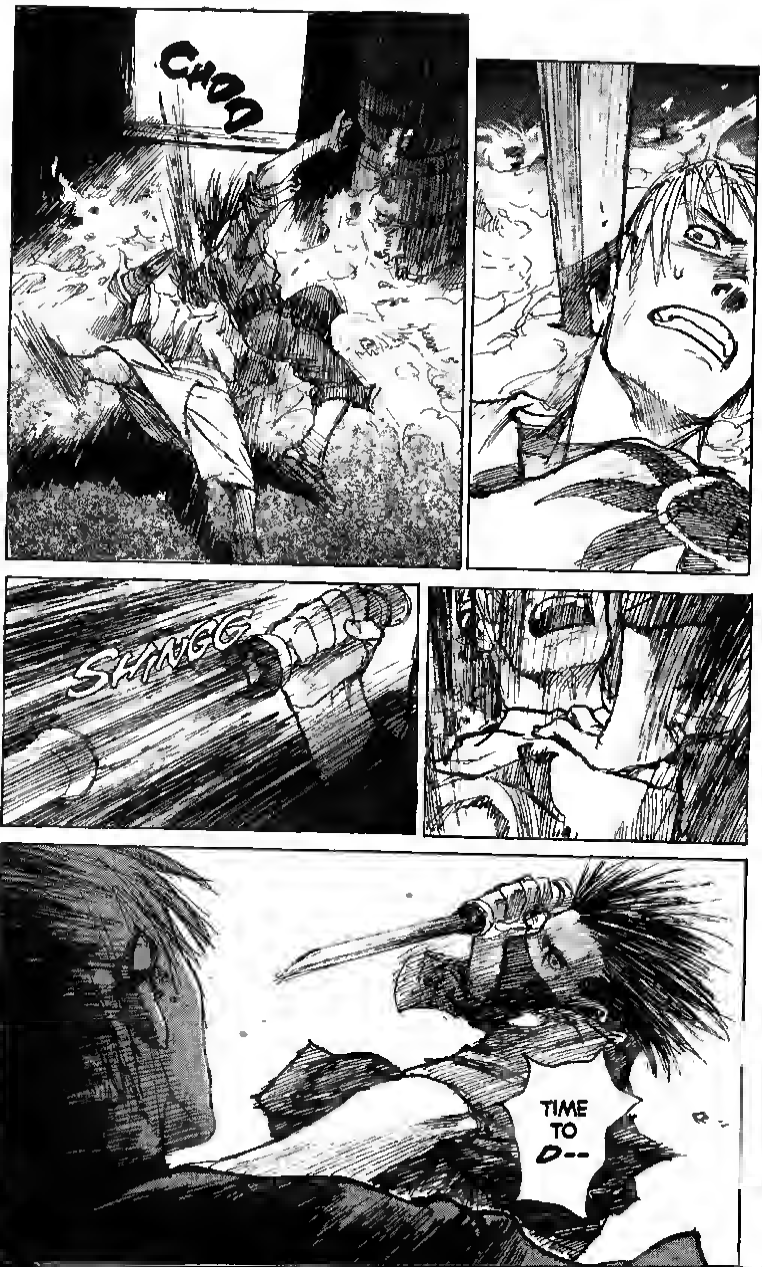
RRG...
.....!
THAT LITTLE KICK OF MINE OPEN UP YOUR WOUND...?
HUH?
WHAT'S THE *PROB*?
IS *THAT* YOUR EXCUSE FOR BEING SO FRIGGIN' *LAME*?!
!
DUMBASS. YOU GONNA GET *HACKED*, AND IT'S YOUR OWN DAMN FAULT.








KRACH
AH?!
SHIT!!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TIME
TO
D--

KRAK
TO BE CONTINUED...!

LETTERS

send letters to

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL, c/o DARK HORSE COMICS
10956 SE MAIN STREET MILWAUKIE, OREGON 97222
www.darkhorse.com • blade@darkhorse.com • www.studioproteus.com

Wow. Shira really is off his rocker! It's painful to even *think* about him using those — *things* as a weapon. Here's a letter!

Dark Horse,

Blade continues engage, shock, and entertain me. For a long time now. It has kept my faith in comics due to its individuality and consistent quality. For this, I thank you for publishing it.

The recent stories have taken a very dark turn, indeed. So much so that most publishers would shy away from such material. It goes without saying that the western world's *Blade* fans salute you for having the guts to depict such a controversial story.

In relation to this subject I hope the editor too could give us a guarantee that *Blade* reaches us in an uncensored form. It would be highly upsetting to know that *Blade* has come to us in a butchered state. It means a lot to me to know that an artist's work is portrayed as he intended it.

My thanks,

Stefan Leeming
via email

P.S. Is Dark Horse planning to publish *Man-Machine Interface* [*Ghost in the Shell 2*]?

Stefan, you can see that *Blade of the Immortal* is uncensored. How much violence do you need? And yes, Dark Horse is bringing you *Ghost in the Shell II*! As a matter of fact, the first issue is on sale NOW! Go buy one! Wait, buy TWO!

ABOUT THE SWASTIKA

The main character in *Blade of the Immortal*, Manji, has taken the "crux gammata" as both his name and his personal symbol. This symbol is also known as the *swastika*, a name derived from the Sanskrit *svastika* (meaning "welfare," from *su* — "well" + *asti* — "he is"). As a symbol of prosperity and good fortune, the swastika was widely used throughout the ancient world (for example, appearing often on Mesopotamian coinage), including North and South America and has been used in Japan as a symbol of Buddhism since ancient times. To be precise, the symbol generally used by Japanese Buddhists is the *sanvastika*, which moves in a counter clockwise direction, and is called the manji in Japanese. The *sauvastika*, generally stands for night, and often for magical practices. The *swastika*, whose arms point in a clockwise direction, is generally considered a solar symbol. It was this version (the *hakenkreuz*) that was perverted by the Nazis. It is important that readers understand that the swastika has ancient and honorable origins and it is those that apply to this story, which takes place in the 18th century (ca. 1782-3). *There is no anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi meaning behind the use of the symbol in this story. Those meanings did not exist until after 1910.*

ABOUT THE TRANSLATION

The Artwork. The author of *Blade of the Immortal* requested that we make an effort to avoid mirror-imaging his artwork. Normally all of our manga are first copied in a mirror image in order to facilitate the left-to-right reading of the pages. However, Mr. Samura decided that he would rather see his pages reversed via the technique of cutting up the panels and repasting them in reverse order. While we feel that this often leads to problems in panel-to-panel continuity, we place primary importance on the wishes of the creator. Therefore, most of *Blade of the Immortal* has been produced using the "cut and paste" technique. There are, of course, some sequences where it was impossible to do this, and mirror-imaged panels or pages were used instead.

The Sound Effects & Dialogue. Since some of Mr. Samura's sound effects are integral parts of the artwork, the decision was made to leave those in their original Japanese. When it was crucial to the understanding of the panel that the sound effect be in English, however, Mr. Samura chose to redraw the panel. We hope readers will view the unretouched sound effects as essential portions of Mr. Samura's extraordinary artwork. In addition, Mr. Samura's treatment of dialogue is quite different from that featured in average samurai manga and is considered to be one of the things that has made *Blade* such a huge hit in Japan. Mr. Samura has mixed a variety of linguistic styles in this fantasy story, where some characters speak in the mannered style of old Japan, while others speak as if they were street corner punks from a bad area of modern-day Tokyo. The anachronistic slang used by some of the characters in the English translation reflects the unusual mix of speech patterns from the original Japanese text.

NEXT ISSUE:
since 2003 08 11
Next month... Part four of "Fall Frost."

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL
#75
$2.99 US
$4.99 CAN
FALL FROST 3 OF 6
漫画
MANGA
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HIROAKI SAMURA
BLADE
OF THE IMMORTAL
DIRECT SALES

BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL

art and story by

HIROAKI SAMURA

CAST OF CHARACTERS

gumbo-
Immortal Scanner

yuchi
Nice enough to
distro the stuff

THE STORY SO FAR

- Series: Blade of the Immortal
- Date: 2003 08.11
- Volume: ???
- Chapter: 075
- Format: Left to Right
- pages: 00 32 (33 jpgs w/cover)
- Size: 9 94MB
- Source: Dark Horse Montly Issues (UPC 6156895340)
- Last Rls: Blade of the Immortal issue 074

These things are soooo much easier to scan and clean than those TokyoPOP stuff. Enjoy